FOREST MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING (FMAC)
MEETING MINUTES
July 16, 2014

FMAC MEMBERS PRESENT
Mr. Bill Botti, Chair, Michigan Forest Association
Mr. Warren Suchovsky, Suchovsky Logging
Ms. Debbie Begalle, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) – Representing Mr. Bill O'Neill, State Forester, MDNR
Mr. Scott Robbins, Michigan Forest Products Council
Mr. Gary Melow, Michigan Biomass
Mr. Stephen Shine, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD)
Dr. Terry Sharik, Michigan Technological University
Mr. Marvin Roberson, Sierra Club
Ms. Amy Trotter, Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)
Mr. Bill Manson, Michigan Snowmobile Association

Absent: Dr. Daniel Keathley, Michigan State University

FMAC ADVISORS PRESENT
None

Absent: Ms. Leslie Auriemmo, United States Forest Service, Huron-Manistee
Mr. Andy Henriksen, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

PUBLIC PRESENT
Mr. Steve Milford, MDNR
Ms. Joyce Angel, MDNR
Ms. Kerry Wieber, MDNR
Mr. Kyle Johnson, MUCC Intern
Mr. Aaron Morehead, MUCC Intern

I. **Welcome**
Chair Botti called the July 16, 2014 FMAC meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. He welcomed everyone and introductions were made around the table.

II. **Action Items**
- **Adoption of July 16, 2014 FMAC meeting agenda**
  Chair Botti asked for additions or corrections to the agenda; there were none. The agenda was adopted as presented.
- **Adoption of May 14, 2014 FMAC meeting minutes**
  MOTION: Mr. Suchovsky moved to adopt the May 14, 2014 FMAC meeting minutes; supported by **Mr. Melow**.
  Adoption of the May 14, 2014 FMAC meeting minutes passed unanimously.

III. **Public Comment**
None

IV. **Snowmobile Trail Report**
Ms. Joyce Angel, MDNR, gave a PowerPoint presentation to the FMAC (attached).

Ms. Angel stated the MDNR is focusing on logging and recreation trails, and how it is managed. The major players are: MDNR management units (field operations); the fire program; the land use program; and the forest recreation program (the Parks and Recreation Division [PRD] now manages the recreation program but Forest Resources Division [FRD] still administers the snowmobile grant program).

Snowmobile Program: As part of the reimbursement grant program, sponsor groups sign agreements with the MDNR to maintain the trails and get paid so much per mile to groom them. The MDNR inspects each stage of work the clubs perform. The program begins July 15 to get the trails ready for the season. If issues or problems occur, FRD staff work with the sponsors to find a resolution.

Mr. Robbins asked if the MDNR keeps a census on snowmobile users and whether users seem to be increasing or decreasing. **Ms. Angel** responded users seem to be increasing. **Chair Botti** asked how the transfer of the recreation program from FRD to PRD is working. **Mr. Steve Milford**, MDNR, responded there are still some issues that need to be worked out but FRD and PRD are working together to resolve them. **Mr. Manson** added it has been a learning experience. When the program was first moved to PRD, staff had no experience with the snowmobile program. The first year was rather shaky. Since then additional staff have been added. **Mr. Suchovsky** asked if the MDNR has seen a loss of man hours by fire staff doing parks-related tasks vs. their normal duties. **Ms. Angel** responded no, FRD has a commitment to do a certain number of recreation-related hours. The FRD keeps track of recreation hours and hopes to eventually move more hours back to timber work.

Forest Inventory: Each year staff collects data for one-tenth of the state forest. It takes a decade to inventory the entire state forest. Once the data is gathered, treatments are prescribed based on what result is wanted and a plan is created. **Mr. Roberson** noted that there are specific forest health objectives the MDNR is trying to achieve; it is not cutting just to cut. Prescriptions are very specific on what to do and what not to do, which includes things such as “be careful to protect both snowmobile and ORV trails”.

Compartment Review: Multiple MDNR issues are reviewed at these meetings and all divisions (Forest Resources, Wildlife, Parks and Recreation, and Fisheries) are involved. The outcome of the review is a proposal that all divisions agree on. At that time maps to the sales are created, trees are marked for cutting, etc.

Timber Sale Proposals: These proposals are created after all data is collected. Specifications can be customized according to the conditions on the ground. Off-road vehicle trails, snowmobile trails and pathways all have pretty much the same specifications.

Prospectus: At this point, the proposal has been approved and is ready to go out for bid. The FRD then gives notice of the conditions on the prospectus. **Mr. Shine** asked if at this point loggers are comfortable with the specifications of the sale. **Ms. Angel** responded yes. When the winning bid is awarded, the logger has approximately three years to complete the harvest. They may be issued two one-year extensions with operating restrictions. There is also a performance bond required for each sale.

Administration: Foresters meet with the loggers at a presale meeting to review the specifications. The foresters also check once per week for issues, to answer questions, and for contract compliance. **Ms. Begalle** commented the number one issue noted is slash left on the trails. On

more heavily used trails, foresters tell the loggers to remove the slash at the end of each day. The FRD also tries to let the loggers know when there is an event scheduled. **Mr. Suchovsky** commented that the foresters should also remind the loggers to not leave big snowbanks. **Ms. Angel** responded they do try to do that. The FRD responds to complaints as they receive them.

Signing is provided for the loggers and the riders. The loggers are asked to not plow down to the dirt. For the most part, loggers don't like to mingle with traffic so often the trail will have a short detour around the logging site.

Mr. Robbins commented there used to be meetings where the loggers, riders and landowners would all meet prior to the snowmobile season to figure out in advance details regarding reroutes, etc. It worked really well. **Mr. Manson** agreed and stated these types of meetings should be arranged again. **Ms. Angel** responded she would try to schedule these types of meetings within her management unit area.

Mr. Suchovsky commented that often loggers talk with recreationists and it helps if the logger knows why the trees are being logged. **Ms. Begalle** responded that FRD staff is working on a mapping app where entering the GPS will bring up short text explaining what is happening. The MDNR may be able to incorporate logging sites along trails as information to recreational users. **Dr. Sharik** asked how frequently there are violations on the trails. **Ms. Angel** responded that generally people from out of town do not go off the trails. Locals know the back trails and leave the trails more frequently. **Mr. Manson** added that riders have to know where they are, i.e. on state, federal or private land. Unless a trail is closed to motorized recreation, theoretically it is open to motorized recreation. **Mr. Melow** asked about a potential app for riders to use to know exactly where they are and what type of activity might be occurring on the trail. **Mr. Manson** replied that Polaris has an app like that available to riders.

Chair Botti thanked Ms. Angel and asked if there was anything the FMAC could do to assist. **Mr. Manson** responded the Michigan Snowmobile Association holds a yearly preseason meeting and could invite the loggers.

Mr. Melow asked if, in terms of logger-user conflicts, FRD records the data, i.e. type of conflict and severity of conflict. **Mr. Manson** commented that most complaints are someone plowed all the way to the ground. At the end of the season, this type of plowing results in a rutted road issue. **Ms. Begalle** stated FRD does not have a formalized tracking system. Management Units receive the complaints and resolve the issues directly, and there has not been enough complaints received that FRD found a need for a tracking system. **Ms. Angel** stated that FRD has so many checks and balances put into the contracts it can normally take care of a problem as soon as it's reported.

V. **Graymont Land Sale Proposal Date**

Ms. Kerry Wieber, MDNR, provided an overview and update of the Graymont proposal (proposal).

Graymont is a limestone mining company out of British Columbia that has submitted a proposal to purchase approximately 11,000 acres of state forest lands in the Mackinac County area to develop a limestone mine to include both an underground mine and a surface mine. Their proposal also includes the land for the potential development of a processing plant.

It is very common for the MDNR to talk with people before they submit a land transaction application. Staff does not get into a lot of detail at pre-meetings because an application has not yet been submitted. Graymont submitted an application in early November 2013 and the MDNR began its review period. Because it is such a large area, the MDNR immediately put out a press release, participated in local unit of government public meetings and set up a website for people to obtain information about the proposal.

Since November 2013, the proposal was sent to local field staff to start the review process. Forest Resources Division worked with Wildlife, Parks and Recreation, and Fisheries divisions to review and make recommendations to the Forest Resources Division district supervisor. The district supervisor then made recommendations to Ms. Wieber. Ms. Wieber considers the proposal on a statewide basis and then presents it to the Land Exchange Review Committee (LERC). The MDNR has committed to host a public meeting after a recommendation from the LERC, but prior to Director Creagh's (director) decision. An appraisal would typically come after the LERC has made its recommendation but Graymont chose to do its own appraisal. The MDNR is now doing its appraisal. At this point the LERC has not given a recommendation; the proposal was tabled at its April meeting because key members were not present and again at its June meeting. Ms. Wieber expects a recommendation at the August LERC meeting.

Dr. Sharik asked if there is rationale to sell rather than lease this land. **Ms. Wieber** responded the MDNR review was based on the information it received from Graymont. The MDNR is working with the Attorney General's Office to complete a legal review. The appraisals are still under review as well, so the MDNR does not have the value of the proposal yet. There will be a minerals review, value for the land itself, and royalties for proceeds from the minerals (limestone) included in the value of the land. Graymont wants its proposal approved without options; the MDNR is working on other options as well.

Mr. Roberson congratulated the MDNR on the details it released and the opportunities made available for public comment. He asked why surplus status has not been determined and why it was not the first step. **Ms. Wieber** replied the MDNR wanted public comment at the beginning of this process. The review is needed to determine if the land is surplus. The MDNR needs a robust review so it has a good foundation when referring to statute. **Mr. Roberson** asked if a determination has been made. **Ms. Wieber** responded a determination has not been made but the MDNR is receiving guidance from the Attorney General's office.

Ms. Trotter asked if the LERC makes a recommendation in August will the proposal go before the NRC in September. **Ms. Wieber** responded no; if a recommendation is made in August the MDNR will then schedule more public meetings for comment and then an internal decision will be made. There is a chance a recommendation may go to the director before the end of the year.

Mr. Roberson commented that Camp Grayling was told to not submit an application and asked why the same was not done with Graymont? **Ms. Wieber** responded that Graymont will be leaving the majority of its land open to public use. **Ms. Begalle** commented that it will be very rare for the MDNR to say no to a proposal up front. It will spend the time to get the details needed to make an informed decision. **Ms. Trotter** suggested using land transactions that would go to the NRC for information and then action. **Ms. Wieber** stated that may happen more in the future but the current process includes land transactions only going to the NRC for Director Action. **Mr. Suchovsky** commented that there is still a permitting process as well. **Ms. Wieber** responded that limestone mines do not have to go through the permitting process. **Chair Botti** asked if the land strategy plan has any effect on this proposal. **Ms. Wieber** replied it does not; the land

strategy plan has yet to be approved and statute prevents the MDNR from implementing the plan until it has been approved.

Ms. Wieber reported an app was submitted in June to do a mineral exchange of around 1700 acres with Graymont. It is for the mineral rights that Graymont owns beneath state forest land in exchange for state-owned mineral rights beneath the Hiawatha National Forest. The MDNR will go through the review process as it is with Graymont. Valuations would occur prior to the Director making a decision. If the proposal goes through it would give Graymont dominant rights on lands managed and owned by Hiawatha. It would be an exchange of state mineral rights for the mineral rights that Graymont owns. Right now the MDNR only owns surface rights.

MOTION: Mr. Roberson moved for the FMAC to advise Director Creagh to decline the Graymont proposal; there was no support for said motion.

Chair Botti asked for suggestions on action the FMAC could take regarding Graymont. **Mr. Suchovsky** commented he feels action is premature at this time. The FMAC should wait until all the information is collected and it is able to make an informed recommendation. **Dr. Sharik** agreed. He stated the MDNR should provide alternative scenarios. **Ms. Wieber** responded that the MDNR has been considering all options. **Ms. Trotter** reported that the Michigan United Conservation Clubs opposes the sale of this land as surplus.

Chair Botti asked for the timeline on the Graymont Proposal. **Ms. Wieber** responded the recommendation should come out in August. The MDNR expects immediate public response. The director will not make a decision prior to the next FMAC meeting. **Mr. Melow** commented that all the information is on the website and all FMAC members should review the information and be prepared to discuss a recommendation at the September FMAC meeting. **Mr. Roberson** suggested the MDNR post a clearer map on the website so the public can see exactly where the site is at; **Ms. Wieber** agreed to do this.

Chair Botti deferred FMAC action until a future meeting. **Dr. Sharik** commented that deregulation of nonrenewable resources impacts renewable resources which has long-term implications. It goes beyond the resilience of an ecosystem. **Mr. Roberson** stated that this proposal also effects precedence. This is the first in a line of potential large-scale land transactions. While the FMAC doesn't want the MDNR to be the "department of no", it also doesn't want the MDNR to be the "department of yes". He asked if the way Graymont has been handled is standard procedure; there was no response.

Ms. Trotter stated she will bring talking points and additional information to the next FMAC meeting. Ms. Wieber agreed to send the FMAC a copy of the recommendation once it is received from the LERC. **Ms. Trotter** asked if the review will be published. **Ms. Wieber** responded reviews are not normally published.

VI. **Camp Grayling Proposed Expansion to State Land**

Ms. Wieber reported that the military approached the MDNR in February 2014, interested in expanding the area around Camp Grayling. General Stone met with Ms. Wieber, and the local unit manager and staff to discuss what the military was looking for in April.

Camp Grayling is around 147,000 acres that the military uses for training; 42,000 acres are used by an agreement with the MDNR. Hanson State Game Refuge was gifted to the state in 1913. It was deeded for military use but forestry, fish and wildlife are managed by the MDNR. The MDNR co-manages the land with the military. The larger portion of the land is used for nonimpact

training. Now the military would like to pull in other states to participate in the nonimpact training and are looking to increase acreage at Camp Grayling, and looking for land in Marquette County as well to conduct arctic training. The initial goal was to increase the total acres for training to 200,000. 53,000 acres were meant to be in total, not just around Camp Grayling. Any acres obtained in Marquette County would be deducted from the Camp Grayling acreage. There would be a management agreement with the military, but the MDNR would maintain control. The MDNR developed a map of state-owned land around the military's ownership in order to analyze a potential expansion. The military will have to go through the normal application process.

Part of the misinformation that went out to the public was based on the map that the MDNR created. The map(including 5 different zones for analysis was provided to the military so they could review it and see if it complied with what it wanted to do. Someone within the MDNR sent the map out with very little context. Many people thought the MDNR was considering all zones for military use, when actually those areas were only identified so that the DNR could conduct an analysis. The MDNR came to the conclusion that many of those areas have Kirtland's Warbler, as well as Pittman-Robertson funding. When the MDNR entered into the original agreement, it provided all the land the military could use. At the meeting with the military, they understood the MDNR's issues.

The MDNR met with the military and it was determined none of the areas available would work. The military would like to get from the south part of the camp to the west without breaking formation. It was asked if a transportation corridor might work. **Ms. Wieber** responded the MDNR came up with some potential transportation corridors for the military to consider, but the MDNR has not received an application.

VII. Public Review of ERAs

Ms. Deb Begalle, MDNR, provided a reference paper to the FMAC (attached) and reported the MDNR has a set of ecological reference areas (ERAs) that do not fully comply with forest certification standards. A requirement was made that large public landowners must have core habitat areas. The MDNR is tweaking some areas and deleting others based on field staff input. Some proposed areas overlap with lands under some protection.

The MDNR is hoping to have a website with live maps and a public comment email address available the week of July 25. If individuals or organizations express interest in discussing this, the MDNR will arrange a few meetings around the state to take public comment. **Mr. Robbins** asked if these areas are still around 26,000 acres. **Ms. Begalle** responded yes.

The ERAs will go to the NRC in September for information and October for action. October 4 is an external audit for certification. The MDNR hopes to have this network of areas approved by then, but it may not get approval until the following week.

The MDNR has contacted the tribes and has sent letters to the United States Forest Service, the Nature Conservancy and others that have lands that can fit into this type of network. **Dr. Sharik** commented that people are skeptical about this and suggested holding a meeting in Colonial Point Forest, which is owned by the University of Michigan.

Mr. Suchovsky asked why the MDNR wouldn't want to keep land impacted by Emerald Ash Borer in the ERAs. **Ms. Begalle** responded that it doesn't really fit the description of interior habitat for designated habitat areas (DHAs) and the quality is not high enough for an ERA. **Mr. Suchovsky** replied he thinks the MDNR needs to consider future conditions, in regards to ecological change,

more rather than focusing too much on past conditions. **Ms. Begalle** replied the MDNR is trying to meet the certification standards and the ERAs are not the only piece of biodiversity.

Ms. Begalle stated if the FMAC is interested in discussing this more, the MDNR can provide more information. There will be a note coming out next week that the FMAC and Timber Advisory Council will be copied on as a means to reach out to them. A press release will also be prepared.

VIII. **Discussion of Natural Resource Management**
None

IX. **Biomaterials Update**
Dr. Sharik indicated the minutes from the May 14 FMAC meeting summarized the history of biomaterials. It started with a conference in Traverse City in October 2013 where people worked together to try to frame this initiative. From there it went to formulation of a steering committee (50 people or so), followed by major recommendations to put together a strategic plan. Dr. Sharik then put out a call for interested persons. The date of the strategic plan meeting is Sept. 4 on the campus of MSU, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The idea is to get down to brass tacks. There will be breakout sessions to discuss each area. He is looking to get the right people involved.

Dr. Sharik stated he has been working closely with Ms. Lori Phalen, Executive Director, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts and Mr. Don Stypula, Michigan Association of Planning Regions. The goal is to come up with specific action items.

Mr. Robbins stated he appreciates Dr. Sharik taking the lead and making this effort. Mr. JR Richardson will try to coordinate the efforts of groups like Michigan Forest Products Council.

Dr. Sharik announced there is still an opening for a Professor of Practice in Biomaterials at Michigan Technological University. A Bachelor's degree is required. Interviews begin on August 1. He asked the FMAC to spread the word about the position.

X. **Standing Discussion Items**

- **TAC Update**
  The TAC has contributed to the biomass workgroup through a Governor appointed administrative committee.
- **Legislative Update**
  The June and July, 2014 MDNR Legislative Updates were provided to the FMAC via email and was included in their meeting packets. There was no discussion.

XI. **Next Meeting Date**
September 17, 2014

XII. **Agenda Items**
FMAC Recommendation on Graymont
Graymont Update – Kerry Wieber, MDNR
Road Access Issues – Shawn Hagan, Forestland Group
Summary of Outcome of Michigan Biomaterials Initiative Strategic Planning Session - Dr. Sharik, MTU

XIII. **Adjournment**
Chair Botti adjourned the July 16 FMAC meeting at 4:12 p.m.